

Wooden's Wisdom - Volume 1

Issue 19

SELF-CONTROL

The second tier of the Pyramid of Success has four blocks: self-control, alertness, initiative and intentness.

Coach Wooden chose to direct his definition of self-control at the individual by urging him or her to "Practice self-discipline and keep emotions under control. Good judgment and common sense are essential."

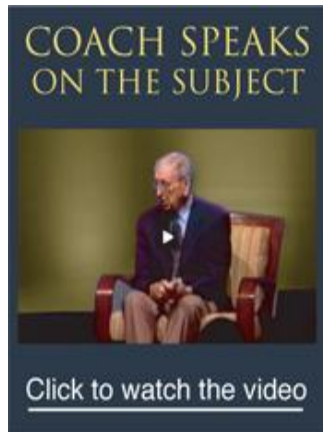


COACH'S FAVORITE POETRY AND PROSE

SELF-CONTROL

*When self-control is at the reigns,
When all emotions seem as dead,*

He later elaborated on the importance of the trait by pointing out its role in making all other aspects of leadership more effective: "Self-control, regardless of what we are doing, whether it involves a physical act or a mental decision, must be maintained to produce desirable results. If emotion takes over, reason usually flies out the window and the acts or decisions are not likely to be as productive as they should be."



This is not only true on the basketball court or in the workplace, but in the home, as well. "Even if it is disciplining your children and our children cry out for and need discipline - it must be done with reason to be effective," Coach Wooden insisted. "If we lose reason in our discipline of our children, it will not be effective. You cannot antagonize and be a positive influence and you will antagonize when you discipline through emotion. Remember that discipline is not to punish but it's to correct, to improve, to prevent, to help, so we must maintain our self-control at all times if we are going to function anywhere near our own particular level of competence, whatever that might be. Self-control is self-discipline."

As Coach often said, "You cannot antagonize and influence at the same time."

Coach Wooden did not allow the use of profanity at practice because he believed it

*My common sense and judgment
gains,
And I am balanced, toe to head.*

Swen Nater

SELF CONTROL

*I've heard it said don't go to bed
while hanging on to sorrow,
you may not have the chance to
laugh
with those you love tomorrow.*

*You may not mean the words you
speak
when anger takes its toll,
you may regret your actions
once you've lost your self-control.*

*When you've lost your temper
and you've said some hurtful things,
think about the heartache
that your actions sometime brings.*

*You'll never get those moments back,
such precious time to waste,
and all because of things you said
in anger and in haste.*

*So if you really love someone
and your pride has settled in,
you may not ever have the chance
to say to them again...*

*"I love you and I miss you,
and although we don't agree,
I'll try to see your point of view,
please do the same for me."*

Author Unknown

indicated a lack of self-control. Coach did not believe that a person could have control over his or her body if that person did not have control over his or her mind, reflected in the manner by which they spoke.

Coach never used profanity himself. His players recall that when Coach wanted to place emphasis on an instruction he would say “Goodness gracious sakes alive!”

What does this mean for us? Coach stressed that self-control requires us to keep our emotions under control at all times. We must make decisions based on reason not fear, since fear is an emotion and therefore cannot be reasonable. Lack of self-control will compromise our judgment, common sense and confidence.

We must also maintain our self-control when others communicate with us in an antagonistic manner. If we allow somebody else's communication to make us angry we have unwittingly granted them control over our own emotions, rather than maintaining control of ourselves. If you don't like the manner in which someone is talking to you, try to concentrate on the information and why they are communicating it rather than how they are saying it. In this way, you can still absorb the information being communicated, but can do so without having your own emotions affected by the other person. Don't let anybody steal your smile.

The example we set is our most powerful teaching tool. If we expect those that we parent or supervise to act with self-control we must maintain self-control ourselves.

“Discipline yourself and others won't need to.”— John Wooden

Yours in coaching,

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